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March 1, 2023

The Honorable Jeff Currey

The Honorable Douglas McCrory

Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Education

**Re: Testimony in Support of H.B. 6758, *An Act concerning staffing for certain roles at the Department of Education***

Dear Co-Chair Currey, Co-Chair McCrory, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) Connecticut, I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of H.B. 6758, *An Act concerning staffing for certain roles at the Department of Education*. This bill would require the Commissioner of Education to employ a curriculum coordinator to provide curricular materials assisting in the implementation of Holocaust and genocide education and awareness courses, among other key topics. We fully support the allocation of additional resources towards all of these important subjects, and, in light of our own expertise and research, can specifically speak to the importance of strengthening the provision of Holocaust and genocide education in K-12 schools.

As you may know, ADL is a civil rights and anti-hate organization committed to combating antisemitism and all forms of bigotry. Here in Connecticut, ADL provides anti-bias training to students and educators and develops innovative materials, programs, and services that build bridges of communication and understanding.

When students do not understand the history of the Holocaust and other genocides, or the elements leading to these tragedies, they cannot fully grasp the significance of bias and bigotry today or the lasting impact that hateful words and conduct can have on the community at large. In 2021, ADL recorded [331 antisemitic incidents](#) in non-Jewish K-12 schools. Many of these incidents included swastikas and Holocaust-related messages, such as "Gas Jews," "Heil Hitler," and "Hitler was right." Although final data is still being compiled, we expect to see consistent trends in our data for 2022.

Connecticut has already recognized the vital need for Holocaust and genocide education in its schools. This legislature now has a unique opportunity to take the next step and equip educators with the resources that will allow them to most effectively teach this crucial subject. We echo the calls from other organizations that have requested additional data collection to be part of this bill. By tracking and surveying how and where genocide education is currently being taught, Connecticut can ensure that students have access to the education that this legislature mandated in 2018. Education is a powerful way to confront hate, and schools must have the appropriate tools and curricula to help students learn from the past.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge you to give H.B. 6758 a favorable report.

Sincerely,  
Stacey G. Sobel, Esq.  
Regional Director